



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **HUDGENS URGES GEORGIANS TO USE CAUTION WHEN CLEARING LEAVES**

**Atlanta --** Insurance and Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens advises Georgians to use caution when clearing and burning leaves in the upcoming weeks.

"Autumn should be a time for families to enjoy their yards and outdoor chores," Hudgens said. "I recommend that citizens take precautions and contact their local fire department before burning anything, and remember to never leave a fire unattended."

Many outdoor fires occur in the fall when people burn leaves and forget to take the necessary precautions. Commissioner Hudgens offers the following tips when burning leaves:

- Check with your local fire department or other authorities before burning leaves in your yard. Some jurisdictions require a burn permit.
- Consider the weather. Don't burn leaves on a windy day or when conditions are extremely dry. Also consider prolonged weather conditions, such as a drought, when deciding whether to burn leaves.
- Clear leaves, weeds, brush and other vegetation at least 30 feet from your home; never pile leaves close to the home. If you bag your leaves, store bags away from your home.
- Do not discard cigarettes near leaves and other dry vegetation.
- Keep a water hose nearby to put out any stray flames or sparks.

Last year, there were 6,773 reported brush and grass fires in Georgia resulting in four fatalities and 20 injuries. Property loss was estimated at \$500,000.

For more information about fire safety and how to prevent fires, please call 800-656-2298 or visit us online at [www.oci.ga.gov](http://www.oci.ga.gov).